




Speech By
Charis Mullen

MEMBER FOR JORDAN

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPIT MASTER PLAN BILL

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (12.27 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Spit Master Plan 2019. It is great to hear that the member for Surfers Paradise advocated for a master plan since 2015. If only the member did something about it before, such as when he was a minister and a senior Gold Coast representative. If that is not the definition of impotence, I am not sure what is.

The evolution of the Spit from a shifting sandbank to a stabilised and fully established land form is not only an example of an incredible natural wonder but an important lesson in listening and supporting community and industry expectations. We know that for over 30 years the Spit has been the basis of conflicting views, over-the-top proposals—mainly supported by those opposite—and incredibly passionate protest to protect something considered very special.

Ultimately, the Spit needed strong leadership. I hope the member for Surfers Paradise is listening. The Palaszczuk government took that step in August 2017 when the Premier announced that a re-elected Labor government would develop a new master plan for the Spit—a master plan that would ensure that building height limits would not exceed three storeys and that the open public space to the north of Sea World would be preserved for future generations.

I appreciate that not everyone agrees with a number of historic decisions about the Spit, but we must continue to move forward. I strongly believe that the bill before us today will allow the implementation of a master plan well considered, thoughtful and balanced. That is the critical point here—balance. Balancing the community's desire to protect the area's significant environmental values whilst ensuring sensible, sustainable development will provide access to all the Spit has to offer.

The overall character of the Spit, its role and contribution to the Gold Coast and its connection to the city has been articulated in some clear and involved strategies with the master plan. We also know that as the population of the Gold Coast grows the Spit's value as a multifaceted landscape offering ecological, recreational and economic benefits will continue to grow. One of the key drivers of course is growing that green peninsula, ensuring the natural coastal ecosystems of the Spit are protected through best practice, area management and threatened species conservation. Working in partnership with the community, we can ensure that the Federation Walk Coastal Reserve, Wave Break Island and Curlew Island are managed well, that coastal dunes are enhanced to maintain stability and resilience, and that coastal and estuarine vegetation is established in suitable locations.

At the same time it is important for people to connect with the natural attributes of the Spit, and the master plan envisages facilities and infrastructure within those green spaces to accommodate a wide range of recreational and leisure activities. It is important to also appreciate that the Spit is a place of significant employment and tourism, attracting both residents and visitors. However, there is an opportunity through sensitive development to build on and strengthen the Spit as the home to some of the Gold Coast's well-known tourist attractions and recreational facilities.

The iconic Sea World theme park will continue to attract visitors, and I certainly have very fond memories of visiting Sea World in the eighties as a child and taking my own children there in recent years. Future development will deliver additional short-term accommodation, revitalise the village centre

and ensure that more certain tenure arrangements after years of uncertainty build the confidence of businesses to invest in new and expanded facilities, services and visitor experiences. One of the challenges of the Spit has always been its connectivity back to the city. As outlined in the master plan, movement to and from the Spit should be convenient, efficient and safe. Road network improvements and improved public transport connections will make the experience of travelling to and from the Spit more enjoyable for all.

The Spit Master Plan comes with an important financial commitment from the Palaszczuk Labor government—\$60 million towards infrastructure projects to progress its implementation. The projects identified in the master plan are expected to create potentially 1,800 new jobs during the lifetime of the plan's implementation and there is clear confidence in the master plan, with a total of \$145 million already committed for investment by the public and private sector, including \$50 million from Village Roadshow and a \$35 million contribution from the City of Gold Coast. Importantly, the community has been very much involved in the development of the master plan. I was heartened to read that over 2,500 people attended the consultation sessions convened, with over 23,000 individual pieces of feedback received. This is clearly a plan led by the community.

The Spit Master Plan 2019 delivers those important operational amendments that are required to implement the Spit Master Plan and will support the work of the Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning and the Gold Coast Waterways Authority to preserve the Spit as an ecological and community asset for future generations, create jobs and boost further investment in the Gold Coast. As the minister said in his introductory speech, comments which I will echo, the Spit Master Plan provides a clear example of what can be achieved when you provide clear leadership and take the community with you. I commend the bill to the House.